

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

Arson attack calls attention to role of Deacons for Defense in Black struggle

— PAGE 9

VOL. 76/NO. 11 MARCH 19, 2012

'Openings to recruit'—SWP sets up in Nebraska

BY JOHN STUDER

DES MOINES, Iowa—"Celebrate the launching of the Socialist Workers Party branch organizing committee in Lincoln" and "2012 Iowa Socialist Workers Campaign—David Rosenfeld for U.S. Congress, 3rd CD, Margaret Trove for State Senate District 18" read two banners displayed at a March 3 public meeting held at the Socialist Workers campaign headquarters here.

"We think there are openings to recruit to our movement today," Joe Swanson, organizer of the newly formed party branch organizing committee in Lincoln, Neb., told the meeting. "We are establishing a presence in Lincoln to strengthen the party's ability to participate in workers' resistance to the bosses' increasing attacks and to discuss the need for a revolutionary party with fellow workers."

Rosenfeld, who chaired the meeting, announced the launching of the party's election campaigns in three states: Washington, Illinois and Iowa.

"We are running to give a voice
Continued on page 7

Europe joblessness on rise as rulers push to deepen exploitation of labor

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The worldwide crisis of capitalism, rooted in a slowdown in production and trade, is manifest in rising unemployment in much of Europe. Within the eurozone, the 17 nations that share

Frame-up charges are 'clear attack on union'

2 locked-out sugar workers say 'not guilty'



Locked-out workers picket American Crystal Sugar in Moorhead, Minn., Feb. 6. Two members of union negotiating committee face trumped-up charges for alleged picket line incidents.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS—Two workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar Co. are fighting trumped-up criminal charges for alleged incidents while on picket duty at two of the company's seven facilities in the Upper Midwest. Some 1,300 workers—members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco

Workers and Grain Millers union—were locked out Aug. 1 after rejecting the bosses' union-busting contract proposal.

Brad Knapper, from the American Crystal factory in Moorhead, Minn.,
Continued on page 5

Atty. Gen.: Gov't can assassinate U.S. citizens

BY NAOMI CRAINE

The Barack Obama administration used a March 5 speech by Attorney General Eric Holder to defend the bipartisan policy of targeted killings of those it claims are terrorists. The talk highlighted the continuity of Washington's course, including expanding executive powers and making inroads

ATTACK ON RIGHTS PART OF BOSSES' ANTI-LABOR DRIVE

—See editorial, p. 7

against Constitutional protections, going back to the administration of George W. Bush and before.

It's legal for the U.S. president to issue an order targeting a U.S. citizen for the "use of lethal force," Holder stated in his speech at the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago. And since it's "legal," please stop calling it "assassination," he added.

The top Justice Department official
Continued on page 7

Virginia defenders of abortion rights win round, keep fighting



AP Photo/Richmond Times-Dispatch, Eva Russo
Defenders of women's right to choose abortion rally at Virginia State Capitol March 3. Thirty protesters who were arrested on Capitol steps are fighting "trespassing" charges.

BY JOHN STUDER

Some 1,000 protesters marched through downtown Richmond and rallied at the Virginia State Capitol March 3 to "demand that the legislative attacks on abortion, contraceptives, and women's rights in general stop immediately." The action was the latest in a series of protests against bills in the state legislature aimed at curtailing women's right to choose abortion. The demonstrations have been successful in pushing back a number of the attacks.

A so-called "Personhood" bill,
Continued on page 3

New York City**Saturday, March 10**

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Vale disregarded safety hazard before mine deaths

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL—The United Steelworkers issued a report Feb. 29 calling for the Ontario government to consider criminal charges against the Vale Ltd. mining company and its management in the deaths of two miners in Sudbury, Ontario. Jason Chenier, a supervisor, and Jordan Fram, a member of USW Local 6500, died on June 8, 2011, after a torrent of wet mud and ore flooded the tunnel where they were working at Vale's Stobie mine.

"Vale management pursued a 'production first' philosophy" in which the "focus was primarily on production," the union report states. "Stobie mine management knowingly accepted risky practices and failed to address known hazardous work conditions." The union is also calling for a government investigation into the fatalities.

Vale, based in Brazil, is the second biggest mining company in the world. Since the deaths at the Stobie mine, two other workers have been killed at Vale mines in Canada. The company and union are conducting joint inquiries.

In the deaths of Chenier and Fram, the USW carried out an independent examination, saying the company put too many limits and restrictions on a joint investigation.

Among many issues, the USW found that Vale management had ignored ongoing problems with flooding in the mine, including plugged drain holes and accumulations of several feet of water in sections of the mine above the level where Chenier and Fram were killed. The report reveals that senior managers

knew about the water, which combined with rock and sand caused the fatal muck slide.

Prior to the incident, Chenier had erected double guardrails, safety barriers in the area. The company "should not be dumping or blasting this ore pass until the water situation is under control," he wrote in an email to management. In the two days leading up to the deadly muck flow, the report states, "it is apparent that the double guardrail had been removed a minimum of three times for production purposes."

"We believe Jason Chenier and Jordan Fram would be alive today if Vale management had followed Chenier's warnings," USW Local 6500 President Rick Bertrand said in a news release.

On March 1, Vale issued a statement by Kelly Strong, a vice president and the general manager of operations in Ontario, in response to the union's report. "We reject the USW's allegations of negligence and are prepared to defend the company and our employees fully if required," he wrote. The company's internal investigation concluded that the deaths were the result of "a number of factors" with "no single cause or individual at fault," he said. Vale has not released its report on the deaths to the public, according to the company's office in Sudbury. Cory McPhee, vice president of corporate affairs, has not returned a call from the *Militant* requesting comment.

Among the 165 recommendations listed at the end of the union report is that workers be allowed to directly file "079" reports documenting safety is-



Steelworkers on strike in 2010 against Vale mining company in Sudbury, Ontario, join June 26 demonstration in Toronto that year during Group of 20 economic summit.

sues. Since July 2010, following a year-long strike by 3,000 USW members that ended with many concessions, the company has required a supervisor's approval to submit these reports. In the recent period, the union investigation asserts, "frequently workers were discouraged from reporting hazards."

"One thing that stands out for me is that the union is pursuing holding the bosses accountable. The company says that safety is their number one concern," Tim Levesque, an underground miner at Vale's Coleman mine, told the *Militant*. "I don't believe it for a minute. The almighty dollar is more important."

'Blood money' pours in for communist movement

"Here is a check for \$300 to build the party, the indispensable instrument needed to lead the working class and its allies to power," wrote Tom Fiske, a worker at LSG Sky Chefs at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Fiske gave the blood money—from a so-called performance bonus and a one-time contract signing bonus—to the Socialist Workers Party's Capital Fund to help finance long-range work of the communist movement.

An important foundation of the Capital Fund are contributions of "blood money"—bonus payments and other bribes from the bosses that are part of trying to get workers to accept speedup, wage cuts, concession contracts and dangerous working conditions.

"Normally we have to be without a 'lost time injury' for the month to get the performance bonus," Fiske continued. "This past month the general manager announced there were really two lost time injuries, but they were being 'forgiven.' The bonus came one day before workers were to vote on a new contract.

Walter Blades in Atlanta contributed a \$50 holiday bonus from his job at a nonunion industrial bakery. "The only raise I have received in three years was 35 cents per hour last year," he wrote. "We just got hit with an over 30 percent raise in our employee contributions to health insurance."

"Right after receiving this blood money, said Willie Cotton, who sent in a holiday bonus of \$346 from a farm implements factory in Iowa, "the company started mandatory 10-hour shifts. Shortly after we had a week of mandatory 12-hour shifts and seven hours on Saturday. With one 15-minute break."

Tom Baumann in Miami works in a warehouse, where workers get a quarterly "gain share" check. "How much you get depends on how little you call out and how much overtime you work," he said. "Temps like myself get \$50. I tell my coworkers I'm giving my 'gain share' to the communist movement."

Since December the Capital Fund has received more than \$15,000. To make a contribution, contact *Militant* distributors listed on page 6.

—EMMA JOHNSON

THE MILITANT

Workers in Greece resist boss, gov't attacks

Capitalist rulers from Greece to the U.S. and worldwide are driven by the crisis of their system to assault the wages and living conditions of working people. The 'Militant' points to workers' resistance and the road toward the fight for political power.



Striking steelworkers join Feb. 7 Athens protest of government assault on working conditions.

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The Militant

Vol. 76/No. 11

Closing news date: March 7, 2012

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Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in June, and two weeks in August.

The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Campaign to win long-term readers enters final stretch

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Members of the communist movement and other supporters of the *Militant* are organizing for the final stretch of the five-week *Militant* renewal campaign. More than two-thirds into the international effort to increase the long-term readership of the *Militant*, 394 readers have renewed their subscriptions or signed up for subscriptions of six months or longer—79 percent of our overall goal of 500.

Meanwhile, four more areas—Chicago, London, Montreal and Seattle—have increased their quotas.

“Members of the Socialist Workers Party,” writes Mary Martin from Seattle, “gained seven renewal or new long-term subscriptions over the weekend in Seattle, Longview and Vancouver, Wash.”

In Longview, where members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union won an eight-month battle against the attempt by the company EGT to keep the union out of its grain terminal, Longshore members and supporters bought three one-year subscriptions and two three-month renewals.

These subscribers also picked up two copies of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, one copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, and one copy of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. The first two books are among five on special discount with a subscription. (See ad below.)

“It’s been a tough year for labor, but we are still standing tall,” said Alison Beam, a member of ILWU Local 21

in Longview. “What we have been through here shows you can’t run over Joe Worker.”

Beam renewed her subscription, she said, because “I really appreciate the *Militant*’s content and that it prints the facts.” She also picked up a copy of *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*, a new book by Pathfinder Press, noting she had been following the case of the Cuban Five and other articles on Cuba in the *Militant*.

“Recently, SWP members met with Jake Ostendorf, a ConAgra Foods worker from Hastings, Minn.,” writes Frank Forrestal from Minneapolis. “He picked up his first subscription at a rally last fall against Strom Engineering, the outfit American Crystal Sugar used to hire scabs after locking out 1,300 sugar beet workers.”

Late last year Ostendorf renewed his subscription for two years. During the most recent visit with members of the SWP, he bought copies of *Teamster Rebellion* and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes, another book on discount with a subscription.

In late February Ostendorf brought three coworkers to a meeting in St. Paul in support of the ongoing fight of the locked-out sugar workers. He told Forrestal he had just finished *Teamster Rebellion*—“Great book!”—and wanted to get *Teamster Power*, the next volume in the four-part series.

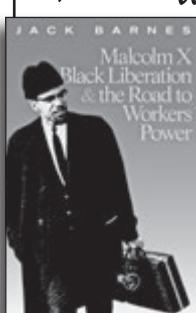
“A port trucker involved in a fight for a union with other truckers who work for Toll Group renewed his subscription,” reports Ellie García from Los Angeles. “He said reading the *Militant* has helped him understand better the experiences he is going through.”

“A frequent sale at the entrance to the Tenaris oil and gas drilling pipe plant has had an impact on workers there,” writes Jacquie Henderson from Houston. Socialists working

‘Militant’ Renewal Drive Feb. 11 - March 18

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Miami	20	17	85%
Lincoln	6	5	83%
Chicago*	40	33	83%
Seattle*	43	35	81%
Atlanta	35	28	80%
Houston*	20	16	80%
San Francisco*	40	32	80%
Twin Cities*	45	35	78%
Philadelphia	20	15	75%
Los Angeles	30	22	73%
New York	55	38	69%
Boston	15	9	60%
Des Moines*	32	17	53%
Washington, DC	15	7	47%
Total US	416	309	74%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London*	25	20	80%
Manchester	10	3	30%
UK Total	35	23	66%
NEW ZEALAND*	25	23	92%
CANADA*	27	24	89%
AUSTRALIA	15	15	100%
Total	518	394	79%
Should be (March 6)	500	340	68%
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by Jack Barnes \$20 \$10 with subscription

This book helps us understand why it is the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class that will make possible the final battle for Black freedom—and open the way to a world based not on exploitation, violence, and racism, but human solidarity. A socialist world.

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Pathfinder
Press

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters \$7 \$5 with subscription

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

by Jack Barnes \$3 \$2 with subscription

Contact distributors on page 6

Militant subscription rates on page 2

Cuban women talk about revolution at NY event



Roberto Mercado

NEW YORK—More than 120 people packed the Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center to take part in an exchange with five representatives of the Federation of Cuban Women, in celebration of International Women’s Day. They talked about the massive gains for women and other social advances made possible by the 1959 revolution in which Cuba’s workers and peasants overthrew the U.S.-backed tyranny and wrested political power from the capitalist exploiters.

Among participants in the March 2 program were students from Brooklyn College, Boricua College, the State University of New York at New Paltz, and Columbia University. The program was sponsored by Casa de las Americas, the July 26th Coalition, and Occupy Harlem.

Shown from left are Federation of Cuban Women representatives Maritza González, Ana Milagros Martínez, Yanira Kuper, Yamila González, and Teresa Hinojosa. The five were in the U.S. to take part in meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Participants bought eight copies of the new book *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution* from Pathfinder Press, as well as five subscriptions to the *Militant*.

—CANDACE WAGNER

there have sold several subscriptions to those who saw the paper outside.

“Earlier this week,” adds Henderson, “one of these workers renewed

his subscription and said to all those who would listen in the break room, ‘The *Militant* gives me a lift every time I read it.’”

Virginia abortion rights fight

Continued from front page

which would declare the cells formed immediately after fertilization as a human being with full legal rights, has been shelved. Also taken off the table were bills that would have banned abortions after 20 weeks and cut off state funding for women lack-

ing money for an abortion if their fetus was found to be “grossly deformed.”

A bill that would have required women seeking abortion to undergo an ultrasound to see a clear image of the fetus, which in most cases would have meant an invasive procedure, was dumped. It was replaced with a bill, awaiting the governor’s signature, that requires an external ultrasound.

“We sent the clear message, to the legislators and Governor McDonnell, that we will not accept these laws now, next year, or ever,” said Speak Loud with Silence, which organized the series of demonstrations, in a statement after the march. “If they continue this assault on women’s rights, they will be met with an even stronger, wiser and more organized force.”

The demonstration was met by a show of force by Capitol and Virginia State Police, many in riot gear.

Cops moved in to try to push the protesters off the Capitol steps. About 40 sat down, refusing to leave, and 30 were arrested. They were detained in buses, with their hands cuffed behind their backs, for up to seven hours and denied food and water, according to Sarah Okolita, one of the organizers of Speak Loud with Silence.

“The demonstration was largely successful,” Okolita told the *Militant*. “However, the treatment of the women who were arrested was unnecessary and outrageous.

“The bills we have pushed back were all tabled until next year,” she added. “So we are looking forward to an ongoing fight.”

Gov't snubs revolutionary's request to visit sick brother

BY LOUIS MARTIN

March 9—In a characteristically vindictive move, the Barack Obama administration and a federal court have so far refused to answer a Feb. 24 request by René González for permission to visit Cuba for two weeks to see his terminally ill brother Roberto.

González is one of five framed-up Cuban revolutionaries, who also include Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and Gerardo Hernández. The Cuban Five, as they are commonly referred to, were arrested in 1998 and convicted in 2001 on trumped-up charges that included conspiracy to commit espionage and, in the case of Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder.

Before their arrests, the revolutionaries were gathering intelligence for the Cuban government on activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups in South Florida. These outfits have a long record of carrying out deadly attacks against Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution, including on U.S. soil, with the knowledge, if not complicity, of Washington.

The frame-up and treatment of the five is part and parcel of decades of unending hostility flowing from the U.S. rulers' deep class hatred for Cuba's socialist revolution and their determination to punish the island's working people, who have defended their sovereignty and the political power they wrested from the capitalist exploiters following the 1959 overthrow of the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista.

René González finished his prison term Oct. 7 but has been forced to serve a three-year supervised release in the U.S. The other four are still in jail with sentences ranging from 17 years and nine months to, in the case of Hernández, double life plus 15 years.

Roberto González, who is a law-



René González

yer in Cuba, has been part of René's legal defense from the beginning. He was present during the 2001 trial, the following unsuccessful appeals by the five, and other procedural matters. He also came to the U.S. when René got out of prison.

"This type of release is customary" and motions in other similar cases have been granted, said René's lawyer, Philip Horowitz, at a press conference March 2 in reference to the request for René González to visit his brother. "This is something that can be granted by the court ... on purely humanitarian grounds."

Other vindictive treatment of the five includes many months in solitary confinement and the denial of visas to Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez—the wives of René González and Gerardo Hernández—to see their husbands.

Rally protests anti-immigrant laws in Ga., Ala.

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA—Supporters of immigrant rights filled a courtroom and an overflow area while some 40 picketed outside here March 1. The U.S. Court of

'Civil rights struggle showed it can be done'



Militant/Sam Manuel

SELMA, Ala.—Some 3,500 people rallied in front of the Brown Chapel AME Church here on the 47th anniversary of one of the pivotal battles of the Black proletarian movement that smashed Jim Crow segregation.

Bloody confrontations on the Edmund Pettus bridge, a week of national protests and a federal court order in 1965 forced pro-segregationist Gov. George Wallace to back down and thousands marched to the state capitol in Montgomery. On March 15 that year President Lyndon Johnson went before Congress to introduce the Voting Rights Act, which struck down discriminatory restrictions—including literacy tests and poll taxes—that had effectively barred Blacks from voting throughout the South.

The commemorative march protested two recently passed state laws. One, beginning in 2014, will require residents to present a government-issued ID in order to vote. The other is an anti-immigrant law known as HB 56. (See article on this page.)

"The unions need to start fighting back the way we did for civil rights," letter carrier James Baskins told the *Militant*.

Several hundred Latino immigrants participated in the march. "This march is important because it shows that it's not only immigrants that oppose this unjust law [HB 56]," said landscaper Raul Castillo.

"We have learned much about the struggle by Blacks for their rights," added Castillo's coworker Enrique Santiago. "They have shown us that it can be done."

—SAM MANUEL

European joblessness on rise

Continued from front page

growing ranks of the reserve army of unemployed over the last year. The long-term decline in employment occurs amid intensifying capitalist competition and a drive by the propertied rulers worldwide to increase the exploitation of labor.

Hit hardest are the so-called peripheral nations, such as Greece and Spain, where official joblessness stands at 19.9 percent and 23.3 percent respectively. Unemployment for persons under 25 is a staggering 49.9 percent in Spain and 48.1 percent in Greece.

On the other hand, the jobless rate fell to 5.8 percent over the last year in Germany, which has yet to experience the unemployment side of the crisis. This disparity is one confirmation that the dominance of the wealthiest exploiting nations of the continent—which had been temporarily camouflaged under pretense of a united Europe—has emerged undisguised and in full force.

The stronger powers, led by Berlin, push more loans on the most heavily indebted, economically weaker nations as they demand and find ways to impose ever more "austerity" to pay for them. That burden has been foisted heaviest on the backs of working people.

The jobless figures came out March 1, the same day a European Union summit opened. The day before, the European

Appeals for the 11th Circuit was hearing arguments in separate cases challenging recently passed anti-immigrant laws in Georgia and Alabama.

"I am not able to get to my job. Be-

cause of this law I cannot get a driver's license," Pablo Sanchez, a carpenter, told the *Militant* at the rally. "We want this law to go away." Chants in Spanish and English included, "Immigrants are marching here, no papers, no fear."

The three-judge panel said it would not issue a ruling until the U.S. Supreme Court decides on a federal challenge to Arizona's anti-immigrant law, expected at the end of April. At the same time that the Barack Obama administration has stepped up attacks on undocumented workers, it is challenging the Alabama, Arizona and Georgia laws for infringing on federal immigration authority.

Thousands of immigrants and their supporters have rallied and marched in both Georgia and Alabama demanding repeal of the laws.

A one-day political strike Oct. 12 by thousands of immigrant workers in Alabama shut down poultry slaughterhouses and other businesses. More than 10,000 turned out in Atlanta July 2 for a protest rally the day after parts of the law went into effect.

In October the 11th Circuit temporarily blocked some parts of the Alabama law, including a requirement for schools to check students' immigration status. But it left intact sections that make it a felony for undocumented immigrants to do business with the state, including getting a driver's license, and allow police to check a person's immigration status during traffic stops.

During the March 1 hearing, Judge Beverly Martin asked Alabama Solicitor General John Neiman if the intent of the law is to force immigrants to leave the state. "I'm not taking the position that that is not the intent," he replied.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CANADA

Montreal

Stop the Deportations! Open Canada's Borders! Speaker: Annette Kouri, Communist League. Fri., March 16, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, room 204 (above Marché Oriental). Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

FLORIDA

Miami

"I Am a Man": The 1968 Strike by Memphis Sanitation Workers. Featuring the Video *At the River I Stand*. Speaker: Anthony Dutrow, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 16, 7:30 p.m. 719 NE 79 St. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

TEXAS

Houston

Virginia: Mobilizations Push Back Attack on Abortion Rights. Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 16, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4800 W 34th St., Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

U.S. Hands Off Iran! Fri., March 16, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

ON THE PICKET LINE

We're workers, not 'contractors' say Wash. state port truck drivers

OLYMPIA, Wash.—“The safety laws don't apply to us because we are mislabeled as independent contractors,” port trucker Abdulaziz Ahmed testified at a state senate hearing here. “I want to be treated as an employee ... so I can get the benefits that everybody else gets.”

Ahmed was one of 100 port truck drivers and their supporters at a Feb. 20 hearing on a bill to change that status.

By labeling the drivers independent contractors, the bosses are more easily able to block union organizing, deny workers' compensation and put the legal responsibility for unsafe trailers and containers—owned by the trucking and shipping companies—on the drivers.

Four hundred truck drivers went on strike Jan. 31 to protest poor safety and working conditions, low pay, and lack of adequate bathrooms, among other complaints. The strikers, mostly Ethiopian and Eritrean immigrants as well as Somalis and Sikhs from India, returned to work Feb. 15.

Continued from front page

was framed up on a felony charge of property damage, as well as a misdemeanor charge, for allegedly scratching a scab's car during a shift change on Dec. 14. Knapper is a member of the union's negotiating committee.

Brad Nelson, from American Crystal's plant in Drayton, N.D., faces a misdemeanor charge for allegedly spitting on a scab during a shift change the same day. Nelson is vice president of the Drayton union local also a member of the negotiating committee.

American Crystal's five plants in the Red River Valley, and two smaller factories in Chaska, Minn., and Mason City, Iowa, have been run by hundreds of scabs the company lined up well in advance of the lockout.

If convicted, Knapper could face up to one year in prison. The maximum penalty for Nelson is 30 days in jail. The charges against both union leaders are based on the word of strikebreakers.

Knapper said he pled “not guilty” at a March 5 court appearance and that his case may go to trial March 29. He told the *Militant* he is determined to “clear my name and have all charges dropped.”

“Two union leaders, both on the negotiating committee, are charged on the exact same day. This is a clear at-

Several trucking companies agreed “to boost the pay per load from \$40 to \$44 a trip; to compensate drivers stuck in line more than an hour; and to pay for some trips drivers make when they have no load,” reported the *Seattle Times*.

Scott Hazlegrove, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association spokesperson, spoke against the bill, saying that customers select ports based on cost and certainty of goods movement, and that changing the drivers' status “will negatively affect both factors.”

Also there in opposition to the bill were representatives of the Northwest Grocery Association, Washington Farm Bureau, Union Pacific Corp. railroad and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp. railroad. Representatives of the Teamsters and other unions attended to support the truckers.

—Clay Dennison

Steel strikers in Greece stop loaded truck from leaving plant

ASPROPYRGOS, Greece—About 1,500 strikers, family members and sup-



Feb. 24 protest at Pomona College against firing of campus workers for lack of documents.

porters rallied at the Elliniki Halivourgia steel plant here March 4. The rally was in response to an attempt by the company to remove material from the plant earlier in the week.

“The truck came on Feb. 28 and loaded the material,” Giorgos Sifonios, president of the union local, told the *Militant*. “We were not going to let it leave with

its load. We didn't let it leave until three days later. And it left empty!” Within the hour, the union mobilized 300 workers to expand the pickets at the plant.

A week earlier the company fired another 15 workers, putting the total number of firings since the start of the strike at 80.

“The fight is entering a more difficult phase. The state stands ready to openly assist the bosses,” Sifonios told the rally. “We have shown the power of collective action and of solidarity.”

The 400 steelworkers at the plant in this Athens suburb have been on strike for more than four months against moves to cut the workday to five hours, in essence a 40 percent pay cut.

Messages of support can be faxed to the union at: +302105578360.

—Georges Mehrabian and Natasha Terlexis

Rally demands Pomona College rehire fired immigrant workers

CLAREMONT, Calif.—About 125 students, workers and professors marched and rallied at Pomona College here Feb. 24 to demand the college rehire 17 fired workers, 16 from the cafeteria. The college administration fired them after cafeteria workers began organizing a union, claiming they did not provide documentation on their immigration status.

“I worked here for 13 years,” Jose Garcia, one of the 17, told the *Militant*. “Some worked even longer than me. I am happy to see so many students and others supporting us.”

—Wendy Lyons

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 20, 1987

NEW YORK—Deep anger and discussion on how to respond effectively marked the reaction to this city's latest police killing—the gunning down of Nicolas Bartlett on a Harlem street.

In Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn's principal Black community, some 3,000 people jammed into a high school auditorium for a meeting on the case March 5. Two days later, a thousand turned out for a similar meeting in Harlem.

A street vendor, Bartlett was killed after he allegedly made an unprovoked attack on a cop with a pipe. Eight cops chased him, surrounded him, and gunned him down.

The killing came some 48 hours after the acquittal of the cop who killed Eleanor Bumpurs. An elderly Black woman, she was shot while being evicted from her apartment.



March 19, 1962

DENVER—The International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, long under red-baiting pressure by both government and right-wing labor officials, scored a major victory last week when the U.S. Court of Appeals in Denver reversed the conviction of seven present and past leaders of the union. All had been charged with conspiracy to defraud the government under the non-Communist affidavit clause of the Taft-Hartley Act.

John Clark, Mine-Mill president, hailed the decision as “a victory not only for the union but for the protection of all labor's rights and civil liberties.”

Since 1949, when the right-wing CIO officials expelled the entire membership of Mine-Mill, the government has been relentlessly harassing the union.



March 27, 1937

Tens of thousands of workers and farmers throughout the country have been involved in strikes and other forms of organized protest against curtailment of W.P.A. [Works Progress Administration] projects, according to statistics compiled by the Labor Research Association.

An incomplete tabulation by L.R.A. shows that between November 15, 1936, and January 15, this year, there were over 200 such actions in 31 states.

Organizations involved covered a wide list, including branches of the Workers' Alliance, farmers' holiday associations, central labor unions, building trades councils, A.F. of L. locals, project workers' unions, and associations of professionals and white collar workers.

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PathfinderPress.com

Sankara: ‘Women’s emancipation must be conquered’

Below is an excerpt from Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle by Thomas Sankara, the central leader of the popular uprising in Upper Volta on Aug. 4, 1983, that ushered in one of the deepest revolutions in African history. Sankara, who became president of what was renamed Burkina Faso, was murdered in a counterrevolutionary coup in 1987 that destroyed the revolutionary government. This excerpt is from a speech Sankara delivered on March 8, 1987, commemorating International Women’s Day. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

[O]ne single night placed women at the heart of the family’s development and at the center of national solidarity. The dawn that followed the night of August 4, 1983, brought liberty with it, calling all of us to march together side by side in equality, as a single people joined by solidarity in common goals. The August revolution found the Burkinabé woman in her state of subjugation, exploited by a neocolonial society deeply imbued with the ideology of backward social forces. The revolution owed it to itself to break with the reactionary policies on women’s emancipation that had been advocated and followed up to then, by clearly defining new, just, and revo-



Militant/Pat Wright

Women soldiers march in Burkina Faso, Aug. 29, 1985. The 1983-87 revolution encouraged organization, mobilization and education of country’s peasants, workers, women and youth.

lutionary policies.

On October 2, 1983, in the Political Orientation Speech, the National Council of the Revolution clearly laid out the main axis of the fight for women’s liberation. It made a commitment to work to mobilize, organize, and unify all the active forces of the nation, particularly women.

The Political Orientation Speech had this to say specifically in regard to women: “They will be involved in all the battles we will have to wage against the various shackles of neocolonial society in order to build a new society. They will be involved—at all levels in conceiving projects, making decisions, and implementing them—in organizing the life of the nation as a whole. The final goal of this great undertaking is to build a free and prosperous society in which women will be equal to men in all spheres.”

There can be no clearer way to conceive of and explain the question of women and the liberation struggle ahead of us. “The genuine emancipation of women is one that entrusts responsibilities to women, that involves them in productive activity and in the different fights the people face. The genuine emancipation of women is one that compels men to give their respect and consideration.”

What is clearly indicated here, comrade militants, is that the struggle to liberate women is above all your struggle to deepen our democratic

and popular revolution, a revolution that grants you from now on the right to speak and act in building a society of justice and equality, in which men and women have the same rights and responsibilities. The democratic and popular revolution has created the conditions for such a fight. It now falls to you to act with the greatest sense of responsibility in breaking through all the chains and shackles that enslave women in backward societies like ours and to assume your share of the responsibilities in the political fight to build a new society at the service of Africa and at the service of all humanity.

In the very first hours of the democratic and popular revolution we said, “Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted, it is conquered. It is for women themselves to put forward their demands and mobilize to win them.” In this way, our revolution has not only laid out the goal to be attained in the struggle for women’s liberation but has also indicated the road to follow and the methods to use, as well as the main protagonists of this battle.

We have now been working together, men and women, for four years in order to achieve success and come closer to our final goal. We should be conscious of the battles that have been waged, the successes that have been achieved, the setbacks that have been suffered, and the difficulties that have been encountered.

This will aid us in further preparing and leading future struggles.

What work has the democratic and popular revolution accomplished with respect to women’s emancipation? What are the strong points, the weak points?

One of the main gains of our revolution in the struggle for women’s emancipation has been, without doubt, the establishment of the Women’s Union of Burkina [UFB]. The creation of this organization constitutes a major gain because it has given the women of our country a framework and sound tools for waging a successful fight. The creation of the UFB represents a big victory because it makes possible mobilizing all women militants around well-defined and just goals in the fight for liberation, under the leadership of the National Council of the Revolution.

The UFB is the organization of militant and serious women who are determined to work for change, to fight to win, to fall down repeatedly, but to get back on their feet each time and go forward without retreating. This is the new consciousness that has taken root among the women of Burkina, and we should all be proud of it. Comrade militants, the Women’s Union of Burkina is your combat organization. It’s up to you to sharpen it further so its blade will cut more deeply, bringing you more and more victories.

The different initiatives for women’s emancipation that the government has been able to take over a little more than three years are certainly insufficient. But they have made it possible to take some steps, to the point where our country can today present itself as being in the vanguard of the battle to liberate women....

Though the August revolution has undoubtedly done much for the emancipation of women, this is still far from adequate. Much remains for us to do. To better appreciate what remains to be done, we must be more aware of the difficulties still to be overcome. There are many obstacles and difficulties. At the top of the list are the problems of illiteracy and low political consciousness—both of which are intensified by the inordinate influence that reactionary forces exert in backward societies like ours. We must work with perseverance to overcome these two main obstacles.

March BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Oppose rulers' assault on workers rights

Attorney General Eric Holder's assertion of the "constitutionality" of executive-ordered assassinations of U.S. citizens and the NYPD's widespread spying on Muslims are examples of the U.S. rulers' increasing assaults on the political rights of working people. At the same time, workers resisting bosses' lockouts and other attacks face cop violence and frame-ups.

The chipping away at constitutional protections and ongoing moves toward strengthening the executive powers of the president are part of broader attacks on the working class as the rulers respond to a systemic crisis rooted in a slowdown of capitalist production and trade. As this process unfolds, the rulers increasingly sense and prepare for inevitable class battles down the road.

The Barack Obama administration is advancing a course set by his predecessors. In 1996 William Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which expanded the power of *la migra* to round workers up without the right to judicial rule or appeal. He grew the immigration police to be the largest federal cop agency. The same year he signed the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, granting federal cops the power to hold people without bail in "preventive detention" on the basis of "secret evidence."

Clinton expanded mandatory federal prison sentences and increased their lengths, resulting in a mushrooming number of prisoners, disproportionately African-American.

George W. Bush enacted the 2001 Patriot Act and 2002 Homeland Security Act to further strengthen executive powers, many of them secret, and make further inroads on political rights.

With Obama at the helm, the U.S. rulers have deepened these attacks. They go hand-in-hand with increasingly aggressive policing and jailing of working people, targeting especially those who are Black, as well as attacks on the rights of immigrants.

While all this takes place, the propertied rulers don't move to change a word of the Bill of Rights. When laws are won as a result of working-class struggle, their content in practice is determined by ongoing battles and the relationship of class forces.

For example, the 14th Amendment promising "equal protection of the laws" was won as a result of a bloody Civil War. In practice, it was gutted as part of the overthrow of Radical Reconstruction, which opened the door to the imposition of Jim Crow segregation. It will take a revolutionary struggle, led by the working class and its allies, to make this and the other constitutional protections under attack today a reality for working people.

Gov't assassinations

Continued from front page

defended the Obama administration's increasing use of drone attacks and special forces raids to target and kill individuals who Washington claims are leaders of "al Qaeda and associated forces."

"We are at war with a stateless enemy, prone to shifting operations from country to country," Holder stated, so Washington's "use of force in foreign territory" is justified. This includes operations such as the execution of an unarmed Osama bin Laden by U.S. commandos in Pakistan in May 2011.

U.S. citizens can likewise be targeted, Holder said, "at least" in circumstances where they allegedly pose an "imminent threat" and "capture is not feasible," as long as the operation is carried out "in a manner consistent with applicable law of war principles." What constitutes an "imminent threat" is not limited to "when the precise time, place, and manner of an attack become clear," he insisted. Essentially, the U.S. president has the authority to decide if and when these criteria are supposedly met.

The attorney general's remarks were clearly aimed at justifying the killing of Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S.-born cleric, in a drone strike in Yemen last September.

The Obama administration had publicly declared al-Awlaki to be a "specially designated global terrorist" with alleged ties to al-Qaeda, and placed him on a CIA and Joint Special Operations Command "kill list." In December 2010 a federal judge threw out a lawsuit filed by al-Awlaki's father demanding a halt to the government's plans to kill him, saying that this was a matter for the executive branch, not the courts, to decide.

The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which states that no person shall be "deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" does not apply in this situation, Holder argued. "Due process" and "judicial process" are not one and the same, particularly when it comes to national security," Holder asserted.

In plain English, this means that the president does not need permission from a court to order a U.S. citizen to be killed. "Due process" can be whatever the commander-in-chief decides it is. There is "robust oversight" of the president's actions, Holder assured, in the form of periodic reports to "appropriate members of Congress about our counterterrorism activities."

"If the president can kill a citizen, there are a host of other powers that fall short of killing that the president might claim," commented Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, in *Foreign Policy* magazine following Holder's speech.

In the course of his speech, Holder praised the greater bipartisan integration of "domestic law enforcement and foreign intelligence" over the last decade. "It's something that this Administration, and the previous one, can be proud of," he said.

He also argued the government's case for using both civilian courts and military tribunals to try those accused of terrorism. "Both incorporate fundamental due process and other protections ... and we should not deprive ourselves of any tool in our fight against al-Qaeda," Holder said. The military courts have no juries, and allow hearsay and other evidence that is supposed to be excluded in civilian trials.

The war budget Obama signed on Dec. 31 gives the Pentagon the power to detain all "terrorism" suspects, including U.S. citizens arrested on U.S. soil, and authorizes them to be held indefinitely without trial.

Corrections

The article "Women's Rights, Freedom of Religion and Health Care 'Reform'" in the March 12 issue gave an incorrect name for the main piece of legislation comprising the Obama administration's "health care reform." The law's official name is the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, signed in March 2010.

Articles in the Feb. 27, March 5 and March 12 issues incorrectly refer to the fight by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union against EGT Development at the Port of Longview, Wash., as a six-month battle. Union pickets were up for eight months, from June to February.

'Openings to recruit,' SWP in Nebraska

Continued from front page

to workers resisting the bosses' attacks on the working class—from the Teamsters on strike against Nichols Aluminum in Davenport, Iowa, to the sugar workers in Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota who have been locked out by American Crystal Sugar for seven months," Trowe told the audience.

About two dozen workers and a retired farmer came to the event from Des Moines, Lincoln, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Kansas.

Swanson pointed to a number of the openings in Nebraska to join the struggles of workers and working farmers and to advance a communist program. He described the debate there over plans by the capitalist rulers and their governments in both Canada and the U.S. to build the TransCanada Keystone XL Pipeline, and the stakes in this debate for the working class.

A lively discussion took place on whether workers should oppose pipelines transporting oil-sand extracted fuels or hydraulic fracturing to extract natural gas.

Communists neither support the capitalists' projects nor do we agree with the liberal opponents who start with "environmental" questions without regard for the interests of the working class, Swanson explained. "Class-conscious workers start with where these questions fit along the line of march of workers toward taking political power. As long as the capitalists have state power, we will continue to see that they do not care one iota about environmental destruction, nor the lives of workers."

"We've been working with some teachers in the Lincoln high schools to organize a display of artwork by some of the Cuban Five revolutionaries," Swanson said. The five—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González—were framed up by the U.S. government on charges ranging from conspiracy to commit espionage to conspiracy to commit murder. (See article on page 4.)

"There is a reason why so many millions of African Americans have been targeted and thrown into the jaws of the so-called criminal justice system," Rosenfeld said, noting that the senate district Trowe is running in includes much of Des Moines' Black community. "The proven combativity of workers



March 3 Socialist Workers Party forum in Des Moines, Iowa. From left, Joe Swanson, organizer of new SWP unit in Lincoln, Neb.; and David Rosenfeld and John Hawkins, SWP candidates for U.S. Congress in Iowa and Illinois.

who are Black and the legacy of the struggles of the Black nationality in this country, including the massive proletarian movement that smashed the system of Jim Crow segregation, is a tremendous strength for the working class."

John Hawkins, the SWP candidate for Congress in Illinois' 3rd District addressed the meeting. Greetings were read from Mary Martin, the SWP candidate for governor of Washington state.

Maura DeLuca, who just moved from Des Moines to Lincoln to help set up the new branch organizing committee, described her recent trip to Cuba as a reporter for the *Militant*.

"We go to Cuba in order to build a revolutionary movement here, in the United States," she explained. "We report on the experiences of Cuban working people in making a sweeping revolution, both through the pages of the *Militant* and in Pathfinder books like *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*, which was presented at the recent Havana International Book Fair. We do this to show how Cuban workers and peasants were transformed, took power and used it to transform the country to meet their needs."

After the program, conversations continued long into the night at a party in a nearby house.

The day after the meeting, Swanson and DeLuca left to participate in the convention of the National Farmers Union held in Omaha.

Locked-out workers in UK fight ‘hand-picked’ layoffs

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN
AND PETE CLIFFORD

LIVERPOOL, England—Some 150 workers at Mayr-Melnhof Packaging here, organized by the Unite union, have been locked out since Feb. 18. They have maintained a daily picket line from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

This is the first lockout in the U.K. printing industry since 1958.

Workers had begun a series of short strike actions on Feb. 10 after Mayr-Melnhof, an Austrian-owned company that produces food packaging, announced it was laying off 49 workers.

“We are unhappy with the redundancy payments, which are less than last time, and the selection process,” said Phil Morgan, a Unite official, in a Feb. 29 phone interview from Berlin where he was drumming up support from workers at the company’s factories in Germany and Austria.

“Fourteen of us went down to the other [Mayr-Melnhof] plant in the U.K., at Deeside in Wales,” Dave Povey told the *Militant*. “We were well received and workers there are now considering to ballot to strike. They fear having similar conditions imposed on them.” The union at the Deeside plant donated £900 (US\$1,425) to the locked-out workers.

The workers are especially angry at the attempt by the company to handpick those they want to lay off.

“The company designed a method of selection manipulated to get rid of outspoken people,” said locked-out worker Alan Moss.

“You get points for different things, different skills etc. You get one point for each 10 years you have worked in the plant, but 10 points for being put on the ‘Recommendation board,’ where you are handpicked by managers because you did something ‘special’ for the company,” said John Scully, who has worked in the Liverpool plant for 40 years.

“I have never seen the kind of solidarity among us as I see here today,” said Scully.

Support messages for the locked-out workers can be sent to phil.morgan@unitetheunion.org

UK protest counters anti-Muslim demonstrations

BY PETE CLIFFORD

HYDE, England—Several hundred people, mainly youth of Bangladeshi origin, mobilized Feb. 25 outside the Hyde Jamia Mosque and Islamic Centre here to counter nearby demonstrations of rightists from the English Defence League and British National Party.

The EDL and BNP are trying to foment racist divisions following a Feb. 4 incident in this town of Greater Manchester in which two Caucasian teenagers were allegedly beaten and robbed by eight South Asian youth.

One of the victims, Daniel Stringer-Prince, suffered a fractured skull and two fractured eye sockets. His mother, Cheryl Stringer, opposed the planned EDL rally. “It’s got nothing to do with us whatsoever,” she told the *Manchester*



Workers locked out by Mayr-Melnhof Packaging picket factory gates in Liverpool, England, March 1. From left, James Hull, Neil Parry (with sign), and Tony Phillips.

Press reports reveal extensive spying by NYPD

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The New York Police Department has for years been spying on Muslims on campuses, mosques and in their communities. It has been building databases tracking their lives, according to secret police documents recently released by The Associated Press.

New York City cops have been conducting surveillance and harassing Muslims throughout the state, in New Jersey and beyond. In fact NYPD agents function in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia as part of police intelligence and interrogation units. Detectives have conducted interrogations in Afghanistan, Egypt, Yemen, and Pakistan.

The AP stories have been met with a storm of protest from a number of government officials and big business press, underscoring the fact that the question is of great concern for U.S. rulers, going well beyond New York.

“Eternal vigilance in the war against radical Islam is a price that even pacifist New Yorkers must pay for the right not to get blown up at Macy’s,” Michael Walsh wrote in the Feb. 19 *New York Post*. “And if that offends the AP, tough.”

The cops’ “cyber intelligence unit” monitored daily websites, blogs and meetings of Muslim Student Association groups. AP reported that the NYPD placed informants in groups at six City University of New York campuses and St. John’s University. They also spied at Columbia and New York University.

In one case in April 2008 an undercover cop accompanied 18 Muslim students from the City College of New York on a whitewater rafting trip. The officer recorded students’ names for police files and how many times they prayed.

“I wasn’t surprised this police spying was happening on our community as we knew stuff was going on, but surprised it was happening on campus,” Aber Kawas, a member of the Muslim Student Association at City College, told the *Militant* in a phone interview.

Another intelligence report from January 2009 described a trip by NYPD officers to Buffalo where they met with a top Erie County Sheriff’s Department official. They agreed “to develop assets jointly in the Buffalo area, to act as listening posts within the ethnic Somalian community,” the report said, including spying on professors and students.

The cops also spied on Muslim Student Associations across New York state and in New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg defended the campus surveillance on the pretext that some individuals convicted on “terrorism” charges had been involved in Muslim student groups.

Police spying on student groups is part of a larger surveillance operation targeting Muslim neighborhoods, new details of which have become public over the past several months. “The

Evening News Feb. 20. “We don’t want this march to go ahead. ... I certainly don’t want Daniel’s name dragged into something we don’t agree with.”

One 21-year-old South Asian man has been charged with assault. The police are treating the incident as a so-called hate crime.

Some 50 people attended the BNP action against “anti-English race attacks.”

The EDL march in the afternoon drew about 600 people, many from out of town, according to the BBC. The rightist EDL, which campaigns against so-called Muslim extremism, had originally planned to march past the mosque.

The two rightist demonstrations were preceded by a racist attack in nearby Rochdale on Feb. 23. The BBC reports that as many as 200 people smashed

NYPD built databases showing where Muslims lived, worked, shopped and prayed,” reported AP. “Plainclothes officers known as rakers eavesdropped in cafes, and informants known as mosque crawlers reported on weekly sermons.”

In Newark, N.J., the NYPD photographed every mosque in the city, including homes where worshippers gather and educational centers, as well as Muslim-owned businesses, a 2007 police demographics report details. The NYPD put cameras on poles by mosques and wrote down license plates of cars in mosque parking lots, reported the *Christian Science Monitor*.

“This spying is a form of bullying and intimidation,” Ashraf Latif, president and chairman of the National Islamic Association in Newark, told the *Militant* in a phone interview.

“It’s not just about being Muslim,” he continued. “It’s about isolating a set of people based on their religious beliefs. Today, it’s Muslims, tomorrow it may be a lot of sets of people.”

“We want to know if this surveillance is still going on,” said Latif. “And we demand a statement exonerating all the Muslims they’ve spied on.”

The police “are invading the privacy of the mosque and its membership,” said Imam Abdul Muhammad of the Masjid Ali Muslim mosque in Newark in a phone interview. “We have nothing to hide.”

the windows of Tasty Bites, an Indian-owned fast-food restaurant, and harassed others, some shouting support for the EDL. According to the media, the restaurant was a meeting location for young girls and one of 11 defendants on trial for child sex offenses that allegedly took place in the area in 2008-2009.

In the streets around the Hyde mosque, counterprotesters maintained a presence for five hours to keep away small groups of EDL members.

“I’m disappointed with the police and media, they allowed this to become a racial issue,” Abdul Ahad, a council (municipal) worker, told the *Militant*.

“We wanted to show strength and unity,” said Saeed Miah, a leader of the Bangladesh Welfare Association. His organization plans to hold a march in the coming weeks.

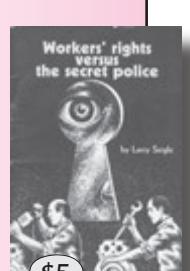
Bangla TV News covered the counterdemonstration, which got less media publicity than the rightists’ actions. “What working people need is unity and resistance to the employers and their government, not this divide and rule scapegoating,” Andrés Mendoza, Communist League candidate for Gorton North in the May 4 Manchester Council elections, told Bangla TV.

Dag Tirsén contributed to this article.

Workers’ Rights versus the Secret Police

by Larry Seigle

Since the inception of the modern revolutionary workers movement in 1848, the ruling classes have responded with police spies, agents provocateurs, and political frame-ups.

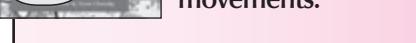


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Cointelpro: The FBI’s Secret War on Political Freedom

by Nelson Blackstock

Describes the decades-long covert counterintelligence program against socialists and activists in the Black and anti-Vietnam War movements.



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'Deacons' prevented violence against Black struggle in '60s

Home of former leader's family targeted in arson attack

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The family of Robert Hicks, who was a leader of the proletarian Black rights movement that defeated a racist terror campaign and ended Jim Crow segregation in the eastern Louisiana town of Bogalusa, was the target of an arson attack on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Hicks, who died in 2010 at the age of 81, played a leading role in the founding of the Bogalusa chapter of Deacons for Defense, the largest Black armed self-defense organization during the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

The Deacons organized desegregation battles in parts of the South and defended working people fighting for Black rights, including during the famous 1966 "March Against Fear" from Memphis, Tenn., to Jackson, Miss.

Hicks' daughter and widow, Barbara Hicks Collins, 65, and Valeria Hicks, 82, awoke at 3 a.m. Jan. 16 to a loud pounding on the door. When Barbara got to the door her car was in flames.

"After the fire department had put out the fire, the fire marshal came in about 10:00," Barbara Hicks told the *Militant* in a Feb. 16 phone interview. "He said he was there to rule out the possibility that this was a 'hate crime.'

"At about the same time a friend of the family, who is also an ex-Deacon, came to pick my mother up. She was chosen to be the marshal of the Martin Luther King Day parade," Barbara Hicks continued. "He pointed out that there were scorch marks on the roof. Someone intended to burn the house down. That didn't work so they burned the car."

The local police said they would send increased patrols to the area. Barbara Hicks said a month later no progress has been reported to her on the investigation, and she has seen only two patrols.

Deacons for Defense

The roots of the attack lie in a lesser known, but very important aspect of the Black struggle of the 1960s.

Coming out of the 1963 victory of the mass struggle in Birmingham, Ala., the battle to end Jim Crow segregation accelerated throughout the South. In Bo-

galusa and other towns in Louisiana, the Ku Klux Klan met spreading desegregation campaigns with violent terror.

In Jonesboro, La., the Klan and local police responded to plans by the Congress on Racial Equality for a desegregation campaign by cutting off power to the Black community and driving in a long motorcade distributing leaflets threatening violence against anyone who joined a demonstration for Black rights. In response Black workers, many of them military veterans in Jonesboro, established the first chapter of Deacons for Defense and Justice in 1964.

The group met weekly and organized to guard activists, patrol the Black community, and to protect demonstrations from the Ku Klux Klan and the police.

On Feb. 1, 1965, Bill Yates and Steve Miller, two CORE activists, came to Bogalusa to meet with Hicks and other leaders of a local Black rights organization, the Civic and Voters League.

Hicks, who worked in the box-making plant at the Crown Zellerbach paper mill, agreed to let Miller and Yates stay at his home. That night, Bogalusa Police Chief Claxton Knight and a deputy knocked on the door.

"They said the Klan was going to come to our house if we didn't turn the two civil rights workers over to them to be escorted out of town. They were young men. And this was not long after the Klan killed three civil rights workers in Mississippi," said Barbara Hicks. In June of 1964 Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney were arrested in Philadelphia, Miss., while there to register Black voters. They were turned over to the Klan by the police after dark and murdered.

"My mother said 'No. They're going to stay here,'" said Barbara Hicks.

They made some phone calls. Soon many men armed with shotguns and rifles filed into the house.

A few weeks later, Hicks arranged for leaders of the Deacons in Jonesboro to come to Bogalusa and help them establish a chapter there. His home became an organizing center.

"My husband could never go out



Charles Sims, a leader of Deacons for Defense at January 1966 rally in Bogalusa, La., warns Klan that days when Blacks won't defend themselves are over. Deacons, many of them army veterans, organized to guard their communities against racist attacks. Corbis

Illinois rally protests cop killing of Black youth



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

CALUMET CITY, Ill.—Some 100 people marched from the police station to City Hall here Feb. 25 to protest the killing of Stephon Watts, a 15-year-old Black youth, by local cops. "We are 100 percent in support of the family until we get justice," said Samuel Anderson (with microphone), president of the Chicago-area local of the American Postal Workers Union. Other speakers included David Lowery, president of the Southside NAACP, and pastor Lance Davis. The postal workers' local passed a resolution supporting the fight after a member brought it to the union's attention. Stephon had Aspergers syndrome, a form of autism. His family said that police had been called to the home many times over the years, but this time they used deadly force, shooting the boy twice in front of his father. Cops claim Stephon lunged at them with a knife. Family members say Stephon was holding a butter knife. More than 700 turned out for his funeral Feb. 19.

—ALYSON KENNEDY

without someone protecting him. They would carry him to work and pick him up at the end of the day. There was always someone in the house," said Valeria Hicks. "It was the only form of protection we had. At one point they tried to take the guns away from us, but they couldn't. We had the right to bear arms, we had the right to protect ourselves. But it was so unusual for Black men to stand up for their rights."

Preventing Klan violence

After a group of Klansmen had badly beaten Yates, Valeria Hicks recounts how she helped prevent further assaults.

"Several white men had surrounded his car and they wouldn't let him get out. He was across the street from my home, so I took my pistol and brought him on in," said Mrs. Hicks. "Once he got to my property they wouldn't dare touch him." Later that night the Klan returned and fired a shot at the Hicks' home. Seven armed Deacons inside opened fire on the carload of Klansmen.

"The Deacons will help the civil rights movement win further victories, by reducing the terror which helps prevent Negroes from winning new rights and exercising rights already won on paper," the June 21, 1965, *Militant* wrote. "Everyone who is for civil rights and Negro equality should give the Deacons every support and encouragement, and should defend their right to exist and grow, free from government harassment."

"Our whole world changed when we got in the movement," said Charles Hicks, Robert Hicks' son and a labor and civil rights activist and retired librarian, in a Feb. 15 interview with the *Militant* near his home in Washington, D.C. "We didn't sleep in beds, we slept on the floor. No pajamas, we slept in our clothes. We began to be a marked family, others didn't want to associate with us. The Klan was powerful."

The Bogalusa Deacons and the Civic and Voters League launched a successful boycott of Bogalusa's segregated businesses and Hicks led almost daily protests over a number of months.

"Black people were loading up in vans and buses and going to Covington and New Orleans to do their shopping," said Charles Hicks, who was expelled from Southern University in Baton Rouge as part of the Louisiana state government's pressure to end the boycott. "The town is 30 percent African-American, if 22 percent aren't shopping there that has an impact. By the time the movement was over, Columbia, the main street, was dead. All the businesses had closed."

The movement in Bogalusa had a seven-point program and forced the city to agree to its demands by the end of 1965. This included ending discrimination in public and private employment and municipal licensing; equal educational opportunities and desegregated schools; desegregation of public accommodations and facilities; sewers, paved roads, and street lighting in the Black community; enforced housing codes; inclusion of Black leaders in city and parish government, and industrial and development planning boards; removal from city ordinances of discriminatory laws; and hiring Black city policemen.

But it took years of further struggle to make real progress along these lines—a process that Robert Hicks remained at the center of.

The example of the Deacons spread to other areas. Some 17 official chapters were set up in the South and many others followed the example.

"Once our community had the Deacons, well you couldn't just go in there," Charles Hicks said. "They knew who went in and out. So the Klan couldn't go in. So Black men began to form their own self-protection. That began to happen throughout the South."